

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated August 31, 2007. In view of the foregoing amendments and following representations, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Following the previous Office Action, the claims stand as follows:

Claims 1, 7 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Sugimoto et al. (2004/0005149);

Claims 2-6 and 10-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sugimoto et al.;

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sugimoto et al. in view of Maydan et al. (EP 0 272 141); and

Claim 9 is not rejected over the prior art.

Accordingly, by the above amendments, claims 1-8 and 11-14 are amended; and claims 9-10 and 15-16 are cancelled. Thus, claims 1-8 and 11-14 are currently pending in the present application.

Each of the independent claims (i.e. claims 1, 13 and 14) has been amended to include the limitations of claim 9 so as to expedite prosecution and place the application in condition for allowance. The feature of claim 9 represents an important aspect of the present invention and a clear distinction over the Sugimoto apparatus taken alone or in combination with the Maydan disclosure.

Further, the specification and abstract have been reviewed and revised in order to make a number of minor editorial amendments. Note that the changes to the abstract are submitted in the form of a substitute abstract. Copies of the amended portions of the specification, claims and

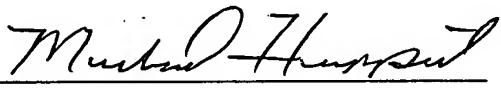
abstract with changes marked therein are attached and entitled "Version with Markings to Show Changes Made."

In view of the above, it is submitted that the present application is now clearly in condition for allowance. The Examiner therefore is requested to pass this case to issue.

In the event that the Examiner has any comments or suggestions of a nature necessary to place this case in condition for allowance, then the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney by telephone to promptly resolve any remaining matters.

Respectfully submitted,

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ABSTRACT

Substrate processing with return processing is carried out efficiently by a substrate processing apparatus that continuously processes a plurality of substrates.

- 5 | It The apparatus is equipped with a conveyor chamber constituting a substrate convey space, a plurality of process chambers in which substrate processing is carried out, a substrate convey means-conveying device provided in the conveyor chamber having a function of conveying substrates, and a substrate convey control means-device that controls the process of substrate conveyance by the substrate convey means-conveying device so that in a case in which after a substrate is continuously processed by two or more process chambers, the substrate is re-conveyed from the last process chamber to any of the two or more process chambers other than the last and return processing implemented, in-is implemented.
- 10 | In the re-conveyance, the substrate is conveyed to said-any of the process chambers after being temporarily retracted to a place other than a process chamber.
- 15 |